PUBLIC SCOPING REPORT

PREHISTORIC TRACKWAYS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Resource Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement

July 2010

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Las Cruces District Office
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

BLM

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Executive Summary

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Las Cruces District Office in Las Cruces, New Mexico is preparing the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument Resource Management Plan (RMP) and an associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). An RMP for public land is more effectively implemented if the management decisions made by BLM reflect the values and interests of the public. However, for this Monument, the management plan also must address and is guided by the Legislation designating the Monument.

The formal scoping process began with the publication of a Notice of Intent on January 5, 2010. This Notice indicated the Las Cruces District Office's intent to prepare an RMP, an associated EIS, and to hold a public scoping meeting in conjunction with that process. One formal scoping meeting was held on January 26, 2010 to share information about the Monument, preliminary issues, and the planning process. The BLM asked the public for comments and suggestions regarding the management of the natural, cultural, recreation, and scientific resources within the Monument. Approximately 100 people attended the public scoping meeting. BLM received 17,388 total comment submittals, of which 17,287 were a variety of repeat form letters. The themes expressed in these form letters are summarized as follows:

- the Legislation should take precedence over any multiple-use mandate
- move Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) routes outside of the Monument in order to protect the trackways
- keep OHV trails within the Monument
- improve non-motorized access and interpretive information
- encourage public involvement, both do and do not incorporate "Expanded Boundary Possibilities for Adjacent Areas" within the RMP
- consider all cumulative impacts such as loss of motorized recreation opportunities and Community Pit #1 reclamation

The other 99 comments followed several common themes about the natural resources within the Monument and the management of those resources.

At their request, informal meetings with a number of groups and agencies have been held prior to and since the public meeting. The initial "formal scoping" period closed on February 10, 2010, and this report will address comments from this initial scoping period. Although the formal comment period has ended, BLM will continue to accept and consider all comments received throughout the planning process. The comments will become a part of the administrative record.

This Scoping Report is intended to provide a summary of the comments received, to refine the preliminary issues, and to identify new issues. The report will provide direction to the planning team in order to clearly identify issues and to aide in the development of alternatives for the environmental impact analysis.

Acronyms

ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
AMS	Analysis of the Management Situation
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
LCDO	Las Cruces District Office
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NLCS	National Landscape Conservation System
NOI	Notice of Intent
OHV	Off-Highway Vehicle
RMP	Resource Management Plan
ROD	Record of Decision
VRM	Visual Resource Management
WSA	Wilderness Study Area

Introduction

1 Overview

Although the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument is relatively small (5,280 acres), there is considerable public interest in managing the area. Conflicting opinions regarding Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use and protection of paleontological resources in the Monument are of interest. In order to address these uses, resource protection, long-term management of the area, and to fully analyze all impacts, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Las Cruces District Office (LCDO) in New Mexico is preparing a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument (Monument) as required by the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009 (Legislation). This Legislation, signed into law by the President on March 30, 2009, states: "Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall develop a comprehensive management plan for the long-term protection and management of the Monument." Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (Public Law 91-190) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA, Federal agencies are required to consider the environmental impacts of their proposed actions prior to taking action. Pursuant to NEPA, the BLM will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) associated with the Monument RMP.

The BLM understands that an RMP for public land is more effectively implemented if the management decisions made by the BLM reflect the values and sentiment of the public. The first step in the BLM's planning process is to identify issues from agency and public comments. These issues were identified during scoping, a process intentionally conducted early in the planning process to solicit comments and translate the information gathered into meaningful input into the planning process and to guide the BLM's actions.

In accordance with 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1610.2(d), the BLM must document the results of scoping. The BLM's land use planning guidance (Handbook H-1601-1) requires the preparation of a Scoping Summary Report to capture public input into one document. This report summarizes the comments received during the formal external scoping period. It also must describe the issues and management concerns derived from the public scoping meeting, internal scoping meetings, the Preparation Plan; and discuss how these comments will be incorporated into the RMP. In addition, this report provides information about the purpose and need for the RMP/EIS, the Planning Area, and BLM's collaborative planning process. This includes a description of the scoping process; an explanation of the planning criteria developed to guide and direct the planning effort; a brief description of the data available for the studies and data needs; and summary of the future steps in the planning process.

1.1 Background & Purpose and Need

The Monument was established by Congress in the Legislation as a unit of the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS). It encompasses 5,280 acres and was established to conserve, protect, and enhance the unique and nationally important paleontological, scientific, educational, scenic, and recreational resources and values. The Legislation that designated the Monument directs the BLM to develop a management plan for the Monument. Current BLM policy dictates that for units of the NLCS,

of which the Monument is a part, a comprehensive management plan will be developed in the form of a "stand alone" RMP and an associated EIS.

The purpose of the Monument RMP is to address management of the natural, biological, and cultural resources and resource uses while protecting paleontological resources and being consistent with the Legislation. Specific legislative points to be addressed in the RMP include the following:

- Manage the Monument in a manner that conserves, protects, and enhances the resources and values of the Monument…
- The management plan…shall describe the appropriate uses and management of the Monument, consistent with the provisions of the Legislation.
- The use of motorized vehicles in the Monument shall be allowed only on roads and trails designated for use by motorized vehicles under the management plan.
- The Secretary may issue permits for special recreation events involving motorized vehicles within the boundaries of the Monument to the extent the events do not harm paleontological resources; and subject to any terms and conditions that the Secretary determines to be necessary.

The associated RMP/EIS will propose alternative solutions to planning issues, in addition to identifying potential impacts associated with each alternative. The RMP/EIS will also identify BLM's preferred alternative, which will be based on both public input and BLM's need to adhere to current laws, regulations, Legislation, and planning guidance. The direction developed in the plan will facilitate management of the Monument as a component of the NLCS.

1.2 Planning Area

1.2.1 Location

The Monument contains 5,280 acres of public land in Doña Ana County, New Mexico, and is approximately 5 miles northwest of Las Cruces in the southern third of the Robledo Mountains, see *Figure 1*.

1.2.2 Description

In 1987, a major deposit of Paleozoic Era fossilized footprint megatracks was discovered in the Robledo Mountains. The trackways contain footprints of numerous amphibians, reptiles, and insects (including previously unknown species), plants, and petrified wood dating back approximately 280 million years. This collectively provides new opportunities to understand animal behaviors and environments from a time predating the dinosaurs. It is also a popular regional recreation area for hiking, mountain biking, and off-highway use (OHV), and through special use permitting, it is used for annual OHV events, which have drawn as many as 1,000 participants for a multiple-day event.

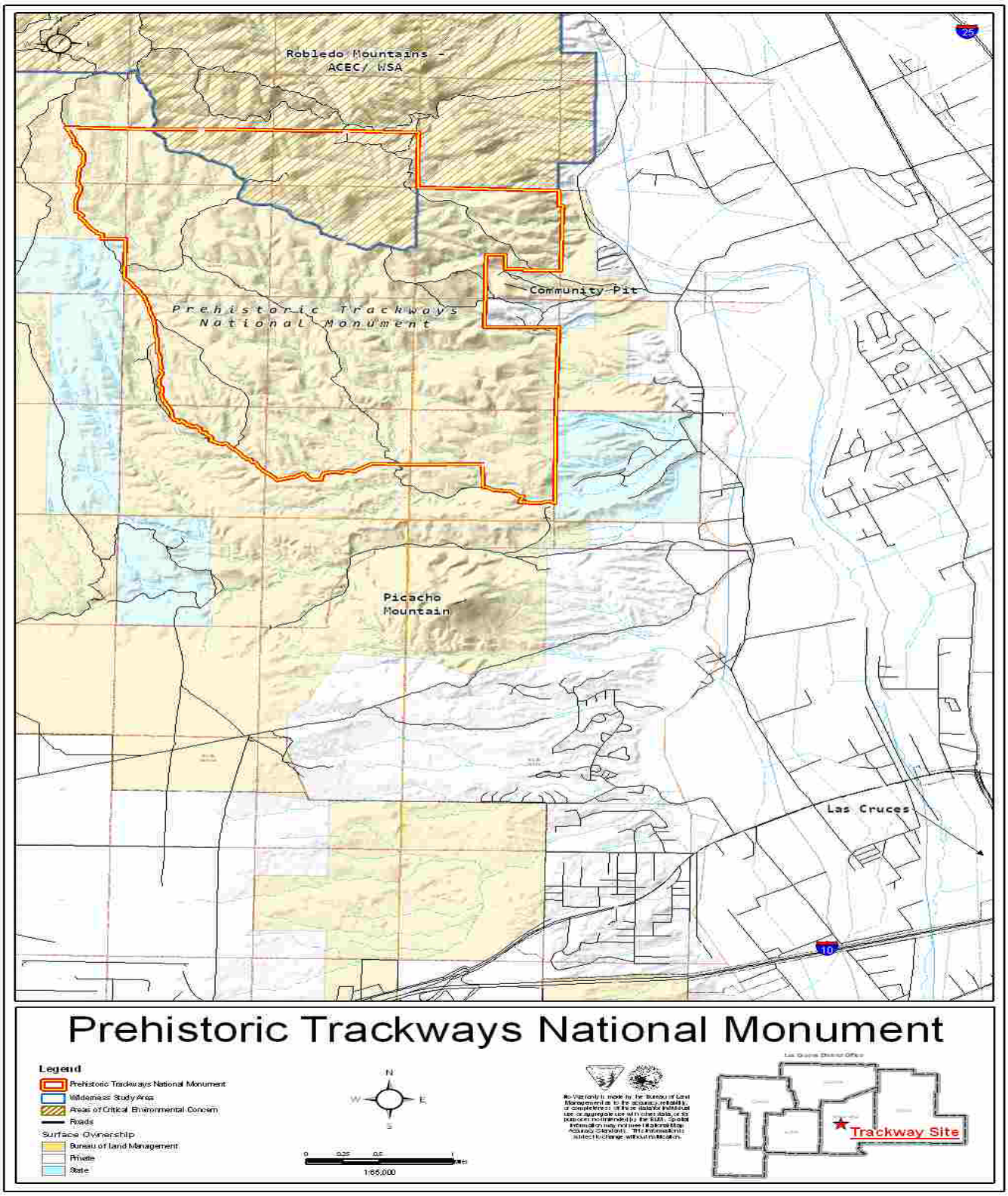

Figure 1 Map of Monument in relation to Las Cruces, New Mexico

1.2.2.1 Description of the Monument and Planning Area

The Planning Area is defined as Doña Ana County, which includes the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument, 8 Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), 11 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), and several towns. The Planning Area includes both public, private, other government land, and consists of approximately 2,436,595 acres. The Decision Area, that is the area for which decisions will be made in the RMP, consists entirely of the 5,280 acres of public land, both surface and subsurface, within the designated National Monument.

1.3 Scoping Process

1.3.1 Description of Process

The formal scoping process began with the publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on January 5, 2010 (Volume 75, Number 2, Pages 431-432). The NOI is contained in Appendix A and on the project web site, referenced below. This Notice indicated the Las Cruces District Office's intent to prepare an RMP, an associated EIS, and to hold a public scoping meeting in conjunction with that process. Press releases, flyers, paid advertisements in newspapers, and the BLM New Mexico, Las Cruces District project web site, http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/fo/Las_Cruces_District_Office/trackways_rmp.html announced the public scoping period and public scoping meeting also.

One formal scoping meeting was held to share information about the Monument, preliminary issues, and the planning process. The BLM asked the public for comments and suggestions regarding the management of the natural, cultural, recreation, and scientific resources within the Monument. At their request, informal meetings with a number of groups and agencies have been held prior to and since the public meeting. The initial "formal scoping" period closed on February 10, 2010, and this report will address comments from this initial scoping period. Although the formal comment period has ended, BLM will continue to consider all comments and information on resource management issues received during the planning process. The comments will become a part of the administrative record.

During scoping, preliminary planning issues and criteria were identified by BLM personnel, other agencies, and in meetings with individuals. These planning issues and criteria will be used to guide the identification and development of management alternatives. Preliminary planning issues and criteria may be refined or new ones added as a result of the public scoping process.

This scoping report describes the public scoping process for the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument RMP/EIS. It documents outreach efforts, summarizes the comments received, and identifies any issues raised and suggested alternatives. These issues are the scope of analysis for the RMP. The document does not make decisions nor does it set forth policies.

1.3.2 Mailings

An initial public scoping packet was sent to approximately 337 interested parties announcing the BLM's intent to prepare an RMP/EIS for the Monument. Throughout the scoping period, an additional 82 scoping packets were mailed. The mailing list included adjacent landowners, grazing permittees, special recreation permittees, interested public, local agencies, government representatives, tribes, and interested organizations. The letter announced the beginning of the formal scoping period, the public Open House, and also requested comments regarding the Plan. Inserted in this mailing was a preaddressed "Scoping Comment Form" that interested individuals could complete and return to BLM. The form contained two questions, plus ample writing space to guide individuals as they submitted their comments regarding the Monument. The public scoping letter is presented in Appendix B.

1.3.3 Public Notices

Public notices in the form of Display Ads were published in the newspapers of record. Table 1 shows the newspapers that printed the public notice (contained in Appendix C) on the dates indicated.

Table 1 Public Notices in Newspapers of Record

TABLE 1 Public NOTICES IN NEWSPAPERS OF RECORD		
PUBLICATION DATE	**PUBLICATION**	**PUBLICATION LOCATION**
January 17, 2010	*Las Cruces Sun-News*	Las Cruces, NM
January 15, 2010	*Las Cruces Bulletin*	Las Cruces, NM

1.3.4 Media Releases and Public Service Announcements

Announcement regarding the public scoping meetings and scoping process were issued as news releases on January 5 and January 19, 2010, to local and regional newspapers, radio stations and TV stations in New Mexico.

1.3.4.1 Newspapers

Articles and feature stories announcing the Public Scoping Open House and scoping process were published in local newspapers.

Table 2 Articles in Newspapers of Record

TABLE 2. ARTICLES IN NEWSPAPERS OF RECORD		
PUBLICATION DATE	**PUBLICATION**	**PUBLICATION LOCATION**
January 7, 2010 January 8, 2010 January 25, 2010 January 27,2010	*Las Cruces Sun-News*	Las Cruces, NM
January 22, 2010	*Las Cruces Bulletin*	Las Cruces, NM
January 10, 2010	*Albuquerque Journal*	Albuquerque, NM

1.3.4.2 Informational Flyers

Flyers were distributed throughout Las Cruces, which advertised the location and time of the Public Scoping Open House. An example of the flyer can be found in Appendix D.

Locations where flyers were posted are as follows:

- Mesilla Park Post Office
- Thomas Branigan Library
- Las Cruces Natural History Museum
- Las Cruces BLM front desk
- Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park
- Doña Ana County Government Center
- Picacho Post Office, Las Cruces
- Dripping Springs Recreation Area (BLM)

1.3.4.3 Radio Stations

On January 21, 2010 at 4:00 p.m. the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument was the feature story for the live radio talk show called “The Bulletin on the Radio” on the local radio station, KSNM AM570. The planning process, public scoping meeting, and the paleontological resources were discussed for approximately an hour.

1.3.5 Web Site

BLM prepared news releases to introduce the project, announce the scoping period, and publicize the scoping meeting. The news releases and informational flyer were posted on the New Mexico BLM project web site (see BLM News Releases contained in Appendix E).

1.3.6 Public Meeting

BLM hosted one public meeting on January 26, 2010 to provide planning and NEPA information to the public and agencies and allow them to identify issues and concerns to BLM. The Public Scoping Meeting was advertised on the BLM project web site and through the local media. The meeting was conducted in an open-house style format including display materials concerning preliminary planning issues, natural resources, and the planning activities. Resource specialists were on-hand for discussion. Each individual was asked to sign in for the meeting and/or to request various materials that will be distributed throughout the planning process. Those not already on the mailing list were added to the project mailing list. Scoping packets were available to all who attended the public meeting and was also available on the BLM's web site. The public scoping packet is located in Appendix B.

As summarized in Table 3, approximately 100 members of the public attended the public meeting.

Table 3 Public Scoping Meeting Date, Location, Attendance

TABLE 3. PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING DATE, LOCATION, AND ATTENDANCE		
MEETING DATE	**MEETING LOCATION**	**ATTENDANCE**
January 26, 2010	Las Cruces, NM	100

1.4 Cooperating Agencies

In January and February 2010, letters were sent to the following agencies inviting recipients to become a cooperating agency for this project:

- City of Las Cruces
- Doña Ana County
- New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science
- New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
- New Mexico State Parks

By definition, a cooperating agency is any Federal, state, or local government agency or Indian tribe that has either jurisdiction by law or special expertise regarding environmental impacts of a proposal. As a cooperating agency, it provides the formal framework for governmental units to engage in active collaboration with the lead Federal agency during the NEPA process. Although the request was sent to these agencies, no agency has pursued cooperating agency status as of yet.

1.5 Tribal Consultation

In February 2010, the BLM initiated consultation with the tribes. Included in the consultation letter was a request for the recipients to become a cooperating agency for the Monument RMP/EIS. The invitation will remain open to tribes as planning continues. Consultation/cooperating agency letters were sent to the following tribes:

- Fort Sill Apache Tribe of Oklahoma
- Comanche Indian Tribe
- White Mountain Apache
- Ysleta del Sur Pueblo
- Pueblo of Isleta
- Mescalero Apache Tribe
- Navajo Nation

Several tribes expressed interest in continued notification of planning activities, but no tribe has requested Cooperating Agency Status.

Issue Summary

2 Comment Summary

All scoping comments documented in this report were received or postmarked by March 23, 2010. However, BLM will continue to accept scoping comments throughout the planning process. BLM received 17,388 total submittals, of which 17,287 were a variety of repeat form letters. In summary, the themes expressed in these form letters included:

- the Legislation should take precedence over any multiple-use mandate
- move OHV routes outside of the Monument in order to protect the trackways
- keep OHV trails within the Monument
- improve non-motorized access and interpretive information
- encourage public involvement
- both do and do not incorporate "Expanded Boundary Possibilities for Adjacent Areas" within the RMP
- consider all cumulative impacts such as loss of motorized recreation opportunities and Community Pit #1 reclamation.

The other 99 comments followed several common themes about the natural resources within the Monument and the management of them.

2.1 Method of Comment Collection and Analysis

Individuals were encouraged to submit comments in writing to the Las Cruces District Office. Comments were collected through various sources including:

- Regular US Mail
- E-mail
- Fax
- Hand-delivery

Comments were organized by letter and issue. A majority of individual comment letters included numerous distinct comments. The form letters and the associated comments were analyzed and documented once per associated form letter, which resulted in a total of 101 comment forms/letters analyzed. There were a total number of 152 consolidated comments depicted for analysis. After all comments were received, reviewed, and documented, individual comments were entered into a database

to assist with the analytical review. The database is structured to depict comments into separate resource categories (issues), document the source of the submittal; and consolidate comments of those previously mentioned.

Then the issues were placed into one of three categories.

1. Issues to be resolved in the plan;
2. Issues to be resolved through policy or administrative action; or
3. Issues beyond the scope of the plan.

The focus of this report is to thoroughly review the comments and, based on this review, develop overarching themes in order to develop a list of possible alternatives based on public, BLM, and collaborative and cooperative agency and tribal input.

2.2 Summary of Public Comments Received

For this scoping report, the specific comments were grouped into similar topics and briefly summarized. As a result of the high volume and similarity of many comments, included is only a summary of the comments from each category and does not include all of the comments, suggestions, or concerns raised by the public. For a comprehensive summary, please refer to the Monument RMP Scoping Comment Table S-1. Copies of original comments are available for review at the Las Cruces District Office.

Comments were categorized into six planning issues. The following section represents a summary of public comments provided to the BLM during the public scoping period. Questions that need to be answered to aid in resolving the comments have been generated to help focus development of planning criteria, development of alternatives, and guide impact analysis.

Issues Identified Prior to and During Scoping

2.3 Issue 1- Paleontological and Cultural Resource Research and Protection

The Paleontological Resource section of the RMP will include a discussion of paleontological resources within the Monument. Resource protection and research will be an integral part of this section due to the Legislation stating that the BLM will provide for research and protection of paleontological resources. Cultural resource management also involves site protection, surveys for identification and evaluation, scientific research, interpretive development, and public education. A summary of the comments for paleontological and cultural resources follows.

- In favor of protecting the paleontological resources while allowing research to continue
- Emphasize protecting Monument objects as stated in the (paleontological, scientific, educational, scenic, and recreational resources) over other uses
- Preserve the ecology and natural resources to the extent that is compatible with scientific research activities

- Preserve cultural resources
- Make fossilized areas of the Monument off-limits to vehicles
- Improve awareness of cultural resources
- Provide adequate enforcement

2.3.1 Issue Questions

The following questions need to be addressed in resolving the Paleontological and Cultural Resources issue:

- How will paleontological and cultural objects located within the Monument be protected?
- How will BLM address inadvertent paleontological discoveries within the Monument?
- How will user groups be educated through paleontological objects located within the Monument?
- How will paleontological and cultural objects contained within the Monument be interpreted?
- Will the Plan encourage the preservation for *in situ* paleontological objects and sites?
- How can the public become more invested in the protection of these resources?
- What is a long-term strategy for the implementation of resource protection?
- How will paleontological resources be managed to allow for research and preservation to co-exist?
- What is the strategy for the identification of paleontological resources in un-surveyed areas?
- Where and how should paleontological resources be curated?
- Where and how should paleontological resources be displayed to allow for viewing and education by the local public?
- How will Native American interests and knowledge be conserved, encouraged, fostered, respected, and applied to interpretation of sites?
- What type of law enforcement and monitoring is necessary to protect the Monument's resources?

2.4 Issue 2- Interpretation and Education

As stated in the Legislation, "the Secretary shall provide for public interpretation of, and education and scientific research on, the paleontological resources of the Monument…" A majority of the comments supported interpretation of the trackways and other resources within the Monument. The ideas for interpretation and education varied from interpretive park rangers, signs, visitor center, brochures, and websites. A summary of the comments follows.

- Include interpretive information to improve visitor experiences
- Have interpretive park rangers
- Display the paleontological resources *in-situ*
- Construct an on-site visitor center
- Do not construct an on-site visitor center
- Create an appealing and educational website
- Prepare publications on the resources
- Permanent housing for the Monument personnel and/or volunteers

2.4.1 Issue Questions

The following questions need to be addressed in resolving the Interpretation and Education issue:

- How should educational/interpretation opportunities be accomplished?
- Where should visitors increase their knowledge of the Monument's resources?
- Is there an opportunity for local community members to assist with monitoring?

2.5 Issue 3- Travel and Access

Comments regarding travel and access were widely varied and covered many concerns. Travel and access comments varied from wanting improved access to keeping the Monument primitive. Others want the Monument to be closed to vehicular access. Comments associated with this issue are as follows.

- Put specific conditions on all forms of motorized use
- Consider and improve access from Interstate 10 and/or Rocky Acres Trail
- Build a parking lot
- Create a driving route with short hikes to the resources
- Keep the roads and trails primitive
- Build a fence to keep vehicular traffic out of the Monument
- Install signs to inform users to stay on existing, designated routes

2.5.1 Issue Questions

The following questions need to be addressed in resolving the Travel and Access issue:

- What is the current demand for motorized and non-motorized access and what is it likely to be in the future?
- What is the best way to provide for that access?
- Is there a need to provide vehicle access to exposed or excavated locations?
- Where should the main access points of the Monument be located?
- How will motorized vehicular use be managed within the Monument?

2.6 Issue 4-Habitat and Its Users

BLM guidance requires that desired outcomes for vegetative resources are identified in land use plans. This includes desired mix of vegetative types, structural stages, and landscape functions, and to provide for wildlife habitat and livestock forage. The Robledo Mountains contain habitat that is associated with a great number of mammals, birds, reptiles and several plants and other wildlife species. Currently and prior to the enactment of the Legislation, the Monument is grazed by livestock. The Legislation states BLM "may allow grazing to continue in any area of the Monument in which grazing is allowed before the date of enactment of this Act, subject to applicable laws (including regulations)." There are no known special status species that are specific to the Monument although the habitat is present.

Only a few comments were made on vegetation, wildlife, and livestock grazing.

- Protect the cactus
- Protect the wildlife
- Consider mule deer for hunting in the Plan
- Cattle grazing should not be allowed or set more stringent limits in order to promote natural plant communities
- Allow cattle grazing in the Monument
- Remove cattle in the Monument

2.6.1 Issue Questions

The following questions need to be addressed in resolving the Habitat and Its Users issue:

- Are special status species plants present, and if so, how should they be managed?
- What is current grazing use within the Monument boundary and can this use be continued without impacting Paleozoic resources?

- Will public use of the Monument impact livestock grazing?
- What are the economic impacts to the grazing permittee due to the Monument designation?
- How will habitat be managed for vegetation, wildlife and livestock?
- Are special status wildlife species and associated habitat present and if so, how should they be managed?
- How will management of domestic livestock be accomplished in consideration of wildlife needs?
- How can public safety be assured while providing the full spectrum of recreational opportunities?

2.7 Issue 5- Visual Resources

BLM guidance requires that visual resources are managed in accordance with visual resource management (VRM) objectives. Currently, the Monument is classified and managed as VRM Classes I, II, and III. A limited number of comments were received on visual resources and are as follows.

- Preserve visual resources

2.7.1 Issue Questions

The following list identifies issue statements for Visual Resources:

- How will the visual nature of the Monument be preserved while providing protection for the resources within the Monument?
- How will the visual nature of the Monument be preserved while providing areas for paleontological research and recreational use?

2.8 Issue 6- Socioeconomic

Comments regarding the opportunities for economic benefit to the community via the Monument were noted by a number of citizens. A representative group of comments follows.

- There are opportunities for cultural heritage economic opportunities with the local community
- Consider local guides, horseback tours, safaris, etc.
- There is a socioeconomic benefit to Las Cruces from having visitor services located locally
- There are socioeconomic benefits to Las Cruces from having the existing OHV trails
- Include tourism in the Plan

2.8.1 Issue Questions

The following questions need to be addressed in resolving the Socioeconomic issue:

- What opportunities for economic growth are available for the communities that are associated with the Monument?

2.9 Issue 6- Recreation

The Robledo Mountains have historically been used for many recreational pursuits such as hiking, biking, OHV use, fossil hunting, target-practicing, hunting, and camping. The Legislation states that recreational resources and values within the Monument will be conserved, protected, and enhanced. It also states "*The Secretary may issue permits for special recreation events involving motorized vehicles within the boundaries of the Monument- (A) to the extent the events do not harm paleontological resources; and (B) subject to any terms and conditions that the Secretary determines to be necessary.*" A concern in years past with the issuance of a BLM special recreation permit for an annual OHV event called the Chile Challenge was about spectators in reference to their safety and the possibility of resource damages. With the designation of the Monument, along comes the quandary of entrance fees also.

A summary of the comments follows:

- Continue to allow recreational activities within the Monument
- Restrict target shooting within the Monument
- Cross-country dog, horse, and foot traffic should be allowed
- Dispersed camping should continue to be allowed
- Disperse the recreation instead of concentrating it
- Prevent any group event that risks damage to the resources
- Recreational use should be restricted to hiking only
- Maintain primitive atmosphere
- Move the Chile Challenge outside the Monument
- Continue the Chile Challenge as it has in the past
- Evaluate alternatives for this event, which would still allow the Chile Challenge and protect the Monument
- Restrict the Chile Challenge to participants only

- Observers of the OHV event should be restricted to an observation site
- Build a self-pay station at the parking lot
- No fees

2.9.1 Issue Questions

The following questions need to be addressed in resolving the Recreation issue:

- How can recreational demands be met while ensuring that irreplaceable paleontological and cultural resources are not damaged?
- What range of recreational opportunities should be provided to meet visitors' needs?
- What facilities will be needed to support the full spectrum of recreational opportunities provided by Monument resources?
- Should the Monument be advertised for tourism and recreation?
- What level/amount of use is appropriate for each recreational use to allow for varied activities and to meet resource objectives?
- How should recreationists be educated to protection of the Monument's resources?
- How should multiple recreational uses (for foot, horseback, motorized, mechanized) be managed?
- How can primitive recreational experiences be provided within Monument?
- How is firearm use, including hunting, to be managed?
- How will law enforcement on Monument land affect hunting?
- How will safety risks resulting from hunting be managed?
- How will transportation associated with hunting and game retrieval be addressed?
- What is the current demand for off-highway use (OHV)?
- What range of recreational opportunities should be provided to meet OHV user needs?
- What is the best way to accommodate this use and still be consistent with the Legislation?
- Should OHV use continue within the Monument boundary?
- What learning opportunities about the Monument's natural resources will be available for OHV users?
- During special permitted events how will spectators be managed in order to protect the Monument's resources?
- How should the Special Recreation Permit System be addressed and managed to meet the goals of the Monument?
- Should the BLM charge an entrance fee for the Monument? If yes, how, where, and how much?

2.10 RMP/EIS Process

Several comments received were in the interest of how the BLM should manage the RMP/EIS process. A representation of the comments follows.

- Maximize public involvement in the RMP process
- Make analysis available to the public before issuing the Draft RMP
- Planning Area should be limited to the Decision Area
- Incorporate "Cumulative Loss of Motorized Recreation Opportunities", this would include more than just BLM land
- Take a landscape view approach
- Planning process needs to approach it as if there are no monetary constraints for ideas
- Compromise, so all parties get something

2.11 Issues Raised That Will Not Be Addressed

As a result of scoping, the BLM has refined the preliminary planning issues and has determined which issues are to be carried forward and which issues will not be addressed in the RMP process.

Some comments received refer to implementation decisions made through administrative or resource program guidance and do not require land use planning decisions in order to be resolved. Other comments are beyond the scope of this planning effort and/or outside of the BLM's decision making authority (Authority is with another agency or entity).

Comments urging the BLM to organize or support a volunteer and/or advisory group for the Monument were documented in the Scoping Report Summary Table, but will not be addressed in the RMP/EIS. Such actions can be resolved through administration or policy action. The BLM is committed to coordinating and collaborating with local groups, clubs, educational institutions, and agencies to promote the resources of the Monument.

A management concern for the BLM is the possibility of the Monument boundary changing due to new Legislation. This concern was mentioned in the Scoping Packet to bring to light this possibility. There were several comments regarding this issue stating that BLM should not consider upcoming Legislation in the RMP. This issue will be documented in the RMP as an Issue Considered, but Not Further Analyzed.

Actions regarding the adjacent Community Pit #1 are beyond the scope of the RMP because the Community Pit #1 is outside the RMP Decision Area. Cumulative Impacts from the actions taken in Community Pit #1 will be addressed in the RMP/EIS.

The Legislation allows the Secretary of the Interior to make minor boundary adjustments to the Monument if additional paleontological resources are discovered on public land adjacent to the Monument. The Secretary of the Interior has the authority to make these adjustments, outside the RMP/EIS process. This issue is beyond the scope of this planning effort and will not be addressed in detail in the RMP.

As discussed earlier in this document, the development of the Monument Plan will occur in the following phases according to the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook, H-1601:

- Making pre-scoping preparations and organizing the staff
- Identifying issues and data gaps, conducting scoping, and completing a Scoping Report
- Formulating alternatives, doing impact analysis, and identifying mitigation measures, monitoring and evaluation requirements
- Preparing and releasing the Draft Monument Plan/EIS
- Conducting public review and comment on Draft Monument Plan/EIS
- Analyzing public comment and preparing the Proposed Monument Plan and Final EIS
- Releasing the Proposed Monument Plan/Final EIS and initiating the protest period and Governor's consistency review
- Responding to any protests
- Completing and releasing the approved Monument Plan/EIS/ROD

The public are encouraged to participate throughout the planning process and the BLM is mandated to support and allow for public participation and review.

Draft Planning Criteria

The BLM's land use planning guidance (Handbook H-1601-1) states that planning criteria are the constraints or ground rules that guide and direct the development of the plan. The draft planning criteria ensure that plans are tailored to the identified issues and ensure that unnecessary data collection and analyses are avoided. Draft planning criteria for the Monument RMP/EIS are as follows:

- The RMP will be in compliance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), NEPA, New Mexico Standards for Public Land Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management and all other applicable laws, regulations, and policies.
- The RMP will be in compliance with the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Legislation). While the multiple-use mandates of FLPMA, NEPA, and all other applicable laws, regulations, and policies will be followed to the extent appropriate, the provisions of the Legislation will prevail in managing the Monument.
- The Monument Plan will be in compliance with the Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) Manual and Handbook.
- Land use decisions in the Monument Plan will apply to the surface and subsurface estate managed by the BLM.
- For program-specific guidance for decisions at the land use planning level, the process will follow the BLM's policies in the Land Use Planning Handbook, H-1601.
- BLM staff will strive to make decisions in the plan compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, state, and Federal agencies and local American Indian tribes, as long as the decisions are consistent with the Legislation.
- The BLM and cooperating agencies will jointly develop alternatives for resolution of resource management issues and management concerns.
- BLM staff will work cooperatively and collaboratively with cooperating agencies and all other interested groups, agencies, tribal entities, and individuals.
- The planning process will provide for ongoing consultation with American Indian tribal governments and the public regarding strategies for protecting recognized traditional uses and heritage resources.
- Broad-based public participation and collaboration will be an integral part of the planning process.
- In the RMP, the BLM will recognize the state's responsibility and authority to manage wildlife. The BLM will consult with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.
- The Monument Plan will recognize valid existing rights.

- The Monument Plan will incorporate, where applicable, management decisions brought forward from existing planning documents.

- The BLM will consider public welfare and safety when addressing hazardous materials and fire management.

- Wilderness Study Areas will continue to be managed under the BLM's Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review (IMP) until Congress either designates all or portions of the WSAs as wilderness or releases the land from further wilderness consideration.

- Where practicable and timely for the planning effort, the best available scientific information, GIS and metadata information will meet Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) standards, as required by Executive Order 12906. All other applicable BLM data standards will also be followed.

- Fire management strategies will be consistent with the Las Cruces District Fire Management Plan (2009)

- Planning and management direction will focus on the relative values of resources and not the combination of uses that will give the greatest economic return or economic output.

- Actions must comply with all applicable laws and regulations and must be reasonable, achievable, and allow for flexibility while supporting adaptive management principles.

- The Economic Profile System (EPS) will be used as one source of demographic and economic data for the planning process. EPS data will provide baseline data and contribute to estimates of existing and projected social and economic conditions.

- The Monument Plan will identify specific goals, objectives, and actions for the use, conservation, protection, and possible restoration of the Monument's resources.

- The Monument Plan will identify Best Management Practices and/or mitigation measures to be applied to existing uses and planned uses to ensure protection of the Monument's objects, such as the paleontological, scientific, educational, scenic, and recreational resources and values of the Monument.

As stated in Instruction Memorandum No. 2009-215, "according to Section 302(a) of FLPMA, the National System of Public Lands is to be managed under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield "except that where a tract of such public land has been dedicated to specific uses according to any other provisions of law it shall be managed in accordance with such law." This section of FLPMA directs that when an area of public land is set aside by a presidential proclamation issued under the Antiquities Act of 1906 or an Act of Congress, the designating language is the controlling law. Therefore, as a general rule, if the management direction of the proclamation or Act of Congress conflicts with FLPMA's multiple-use mandate, the designating language supersedes that section of the FLPMA."

Data Summary/Data Gaps

Geographical Information System (GIS) maps are the building blocks to quantify resources and display information during alternative formulation. Existing and available resource information will be used in formulating resource objectives and management alternatives. Additionally, the data will be used as the basis for analyzing unresolved conflicts. Most of this information needs to be compiled and put into digital format for use in the planning process and developing resource maps. This must be done before actual analysis can begin.

Data gaps were not specifically identified during scoping; however, data for GIS layers associated with the Las Cruces District Office are routinely updated and can be found in the Las Cruces GIS Corporate Data List.

Additional information on the geospatial database and development, GIS applications, and data standards is contained in the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument RMP Preparation Plan (January 2010), which is available upon request.

Summary of Future Steps in the Planning Process

A concurrent step in the planning process is to complete the "Analysis of the Management Situation" (AMS). The AMS analyzes available inventory data, portrays the existing management situation, and identifies management opportunities to respond to identified issues. As stated in 43 CFR 1610.4-4, this is the basis for formulating reasonable alternatives, including the types of resources for development or protection. This analysis will also result in identification of the "No Action Alternative" - the baseline (current) management condition, which includes management designated thru the Legislation.

Following development of the AMS and the Scoping Report, the next phase of the BLM's planning process is to develop management alternatives based on the issues presented in the Issue Summary section of this report. These alternatives will address planning issues identified during both internal and external scoping and will be designed to meet the goals and objectives developed by the interdisciplinary team. In compliance with NEPA, CEQ regulations, and the BLM planning regulations and guidance, alternatives should be reasonable and capable of implementation. The BLM will also continue to meet with collaborating agencies, interested tribes, community groups and individuals during development of the alternatives.

A detailed analysis of the alternatives will be documented in a Draft RMP/EIS. Based on the analyses of the alternatives, the BLM's Preferred Alternative will then be selected. The Preferred Alternative, a stand-alone Alternative, is often made up of a combination of management options from the various alternatives to provide the best management for the resources and Monument objects, which would also implement the guidance from the Legislation.

Although the BLM welcomes public input at any time during the planning process, the next official public comment period will begin when the Draft RMP/EIS is published, which is anticipated for Spring 2011. The draft document will be widely distributed to elected officials, regulatory agencies, and members of the public, and will be available on the project website (http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/fo/Las_Cruces_District_Office/trackways_rmp.html).

The availability of the draft document will be announced via a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register and local news media. A 90-day public comment period will follow. A public meeting will be held during this 90-day period.

At the conclusion of the public comment period, the Draft RMP/EIS will be revised as necessary based on public comment. A Proposed RMP/Final EIS will then be published. The availability of the proposed document will be announced in the Federal Register, and a 30-day public protest period will follow. Concurrently, the Governor of New Mexico will review the document for consistency with approved state or local plans, policies, or programs. At the conclusion of the public protest period and Governor's consistency review, the BLM will resolve all protests and any inconsistencies and revise the document as needed. The Record of Decision/RMP will be approved by the State Director and published. The availability of these documents will be announced in the Federal Register and local news media. Figure 2 outlines the major milestones of the Monument RMP/EIS planning process and public participation. All publications, including this report, newsletters, the Draft RMP/EIS, and the Notices of Availability, will be available on the official Prehistoric Trackways National Monument RMP web site (http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/fo/Las_Cruces_District_Office/trackways_rmp.html) as they are completed.

For Further Information

The public is invited and encouraged to participate throughout the planning process for the RMP. Some ways to participate include:

- Reviewing the progress of the RMP at the official Prehistoric Trackways National Monument RMP/EIS web site at http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/fo/Las_Cruces_District_Office/trackways_rmp.html

- The website will be updated with information, documents, and announcements throughout the duration of the RMP preparation; and

- Requesting to be added to or to remain on the official RMP project mailing list in order to receive future mailings and information.

Anyone wishing to be added to or deleted from the distribution list or requesting further information may e-mail their request to Lori_Allen@blm.gov or contact Lori Allen, RMP Planner at (575) 525-4454. Please provide your name and mailing address.

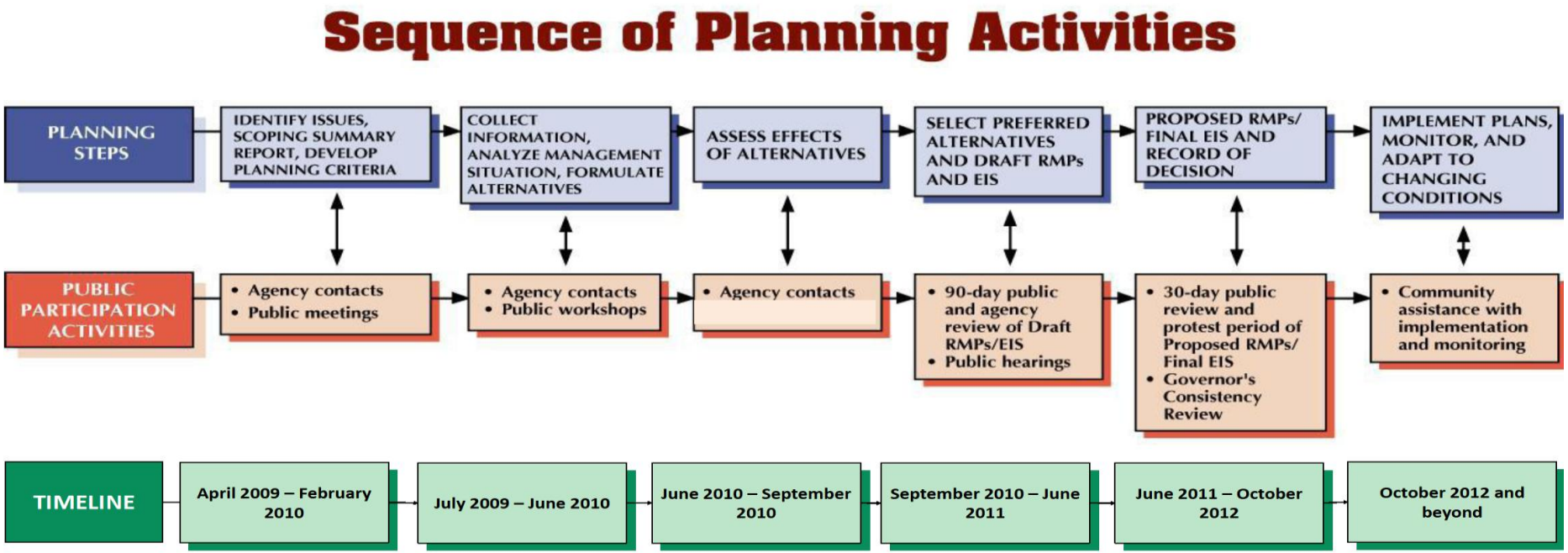

Figure 2 Sequence of Planning Activities for the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument RMP

Appendix A: Notice of Intent

until February 19, 2010. The date(s) and location(s) of any scoping meetings will be announced at least 15 days in advance through local media, newspapers, and the BLM Web site at: *http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/cedar_city/planning.html.* In order to be considered in the Draft EIS, all comments must be received prior to the close of the scoping period or 15 days after the last public meeting, whichever is later. The BLM will provide additional opportunities for public participation upon publication of the Draft EIS.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments related to the Sigurd-Red Butte 345 Transmission Line Project by any of the following methods:

- *Web site: http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/cedar_city/planning.html.*
- *Mail:* Bureau of Land Management, Cedar City Field Office, 176 East D.L. Sargent Drive, Cedar City, Utah 84721, Attention: Lucas Lucero.
- *E-mail: utsrbproj@blm.gov.*

Documents pertinent to the right-of-way (ROW) application for the transmission line project may be examined at:

- U.S. Forest Service, Dixie Office, 1789 North Wedgewood Lane, Cedar City, Utah 84721.
- U.S. Forest Service, Fishlake Office, 115 East 900 North, Richfield, Utah 84701.
- BLM, Cedar City Field Office, 176 D.L. Sargent Drive, Cedar City, Utah 84721.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information and/or to have your name added to our mailing list, contact Lucas Lucero, BLM Project Manager; telephone (702) 515–5059; e-mail *Lucas_Lucero@blm.gov*; address BLM, Cedar City Field Office, 176 East D.L. Sargent Drive, Cedar City, Utah 84721.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: PacifiCorp, doing business as Rocky Mountain Power Company, has filed a ROW application seeking authorization to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission a 345 kV single-circuit overhead electric transmission line on Federal lands. The project would provide an additional 600 megawatts of reliable electrical capacity by 2014 to respond to anticipated load growth in Southwestern Utah. The proposed project begins at the existing Sigurd Substation near Richfield, Utah, and terminates at the existing Red Butte Substation near the town of Central, Utah. The project area spans approximately 160 miles. Rocky Mountain Power Company has identified multiple alternative routes between the two substations. Alternative routes identified so far would affect Federal, State, and private lands. The requested ROW width on Federal lands is 150 feet. Rocky Mountain Power Company proposes to predominantly use steel H-frame towers approximately 80 to 130 feet in height with average spans between towers of 1,000 to 1,200 feet. Permanent access roads approximately 14 feet wide would be needed. Temporary work space would be needed during construction for material storage, conductor tensioning sites, and to accommodate vehicles and equipment. Alternative routes currently identified would use portions of utility corridors on Federal lands and parallel portions of existing overhead and underground utilities and roadways.

The BLM is the designated lead Federal agency for preparation of the EIS. Other agencies with legal jurisdiction or special expertise have been invited to participate as cooperating agencies in preparation of the EIS. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service (Dixie and Fishlake National Forests), State of Utah, Millard County, Sevier County, Beaver County, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, City of St. George, and City of Enterprise have agreed to participate as cooperating agencies.

The purpose of the public scoping process is to determine relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis, including alternatives, and guide the process for developing the EIS. At present, the BLM has identified the following preliminary issues: public health and safety, noise, visual intrusions, migratory bird habitat, crucial deer and elk habitat, Utah Prairie Dog habitat, socioeconomic impacts, cultural and historic sites, National Scenic and Historic Trails, and nearby inventoried roadless areas on National Forests.

The BLM will use and coordinate the NEPA commenting process to satisfy the public involvement process for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f) as provided for in 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3). Native American Tribal consultations will be conducted and Tribal concerns will be given due consideration, including impacts on Indian trust assets. Federal, State, and local agencies, along with other stakeholders that may be interested or affected by the BLM's decision on this project are invited to participate in the scoping process and, if eligible, may request or be requested by the BLM to participate as a cooperating agency.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7.

Selma Sierra,
State Director.

[FR Doc. E9–31239 Filed 1–4–10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–DQ–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLNML00000 L16100000.DO0000]

Notice of Intent To Prepare a Resource Management Plan for the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument, Las Cruces District Office, New Mexico and Associated Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Las Cruces District Office, Las Cruces, New Mexico, intends to prepare a Resource Management Plan (RMP) with an associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument and by this notice is announcing the beginning of the scoping process to solicit public comments and identify issues. The RMP will replace the existing Mimbres RMP (1993).

DATES: This notice initiates the public scoping process for the RMP with associated EIS. Comments on issues may be submitted in writing until February 4, 2010. The dates and locations of any scoping meetings will be announced at least 15 days in advance through local media, newsletters, and the BLM Web site at: *http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/fo/Las_Cruces_District_Office.html.* In order to be included in the Draft EIS, all comments must be received prior to the close of the scoping period or 15 days after the last public meeting, whichever is later. We will provide additional opportunities for

public participation upon publication of the Draft RMP/EIS.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on issues and planning criteria related to Prehistoric Trackways National Monument RMP/EIS by any of the following methods:

- *Web site: http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/fo/Las_Cruces_District_Office.html.*
- *E-mail: lcfo_rmp@nm.blm.gov.*
- *Fax:* (575) 525–4412.
- *Mail:* BLM, Las Cruces District Office, 1800 Marquess Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005.

Documents pertinent to this proposal may be examined at the Las Cruces District Office.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information and/or to have your name added to our mailing list, contact Lori Allen; telephone (575) 525–4454; address BLM, Las Cruces District Office, 1800 Marquess Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005; e-mail *Lori_Allen@blm.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This document provides notice that the BLM District Office, Las Cruces, New Mexico, intends to: (1) Prepare an RMP with an associated EIS for the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument; (2) announce the beginning of the scoping process; and (3) seek public input on issues and planning criteria.

The planning area is located in Doña Ana County, New Mexico and encompasses approximately 6,000 acres of public land.

The purpose of the public scoping process is to determine relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis, including alternatives, and guide the planning process. Preliminary issues for the planning area have been identified by BLM personnel, Federal, State, and local agencies, and other stakeholders and include Paleozoic resource protection, scientific research, off-highway vehicle use/recreation, and interpretation and education. Preliminary planning criteria will include the following:

1. The RMP will be in compliance with the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, FLPMA, NEPA, and all other applicable laws, regulations, and policies;
2. Land use decisions will apply to the surface and subsurface estate managed by the BLM;
3. The planning process will follow the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook, H–1601–1 and NEPA Handbook, H–1790–1 for program specific guidance;
4. Public participation and collaboration will be an integral part of the planning process;
5. The BLM will strive to make decisions in the plan compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, State, and Federal agencies and tribal entities, as long as the decisions are consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of Federal law and regulations applicable to public land;
6. The RMP will recognize valid existing rights;
7. The RMP will incorporate, where applicable, management decisions brought forward from existing planning documents;
8. The BLM will work cooperatively and collaboratively with cooperating agencies and all other interested groups, agencies, and individuals;
9. The BLM will consider public welfare and safety when addressing hazardous materials and fire management;
10. Geographic Information System and metadata information will meet Federal Geographic Data Committee standards, as required by Executive Order 12906;
11. The planning process will provide for ongoing consultation with tribal entities and strategies for protecting recognized traditional uses;
12. Planning and management direction will focus on the relative values of resources and not the combination of uses that will give the greatest economic return or economic output;
13. Where practicable and timely for the planning effort, the best available scientific information, research, and new technologies will be used; and
14. The Economic Profile System will be used as one source of demographic and economic data for the planning process.

You may submit comments on issues and planning criteria in writing to the BLM at any public scoping meeting, or you may submit them to the BLM using one of the methods listed in the **ADDRESSES** section above. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. The minutes and list of attendees for each scoping meeting will be available to the public and open for 30 days after the meeting to any participant who wishes to clarify the views he or she expressed. The BLM will evaluate identified issues to be addressed in the plan, and will place them into one of three categories:

1. Issues to be resolved in the plan;
2. Issues to be resolved through policy or administrative action; or
3. Issues beyond the scope of this plan.

The BLM will provide an explanation in the Draft RMP/Draft EIS as to why an issue was placed in category two or three. The public is also encouraged to help identify any management questions and concerns that should be addressed in the plan. The BLM will work collaboratively with interested parties to identify the management decisions that are best suited to local, regional, and national needs and concerns.

The BLM will use an interdisciplinary approach to develop the plan in order to consider the variety of resource issues and concerns identified. Specialists with expertise in the following disciplines will be involved in the planning process: Planning and NEPA, Paleontology, Outdoor Recreation, Minerals and Geology, Archeology, Wildlife, and others as may be needed.

Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7; 43 CFR 1610.2.

Linda S. C. Rundell,
State Director, New Mexico.

[FR Doc. E9–31248 Filed 1–4–10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–VC–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Notice of Extension of Concession Contracts

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior.

ACTION: Public notice.

DATES: *Effective Date:* January 1, 2010.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jo A. Pendry, Chief, Commercial Services Program, National Park Service, 1201 Eye Street, NW., 11th Floor, Washington, DC, 20005, Telephone 202/513–7156.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to 36 CFR 51.23, public notice is hereby given that the National Park Service proposes to extend the following expiring concession contracts for a period of up to 1 year, or until such time as a new contract is executed, whichever occurs sooner.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: All of the listed concession authorizations will expire by their terms on or before December 31, 2009. The National Park Service has determined that the proposed short-term extensions are necessary in order to avoid interruption

Appendix B: Scoping Letter and Packet

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Las Cruces District Office
1800 Marquess
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005
www.blm.gov/nm

In Reply Refer To:
1610 (03100)

January 8, 2009

Dear Interested Party:

In March 2009, Congress designated the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument (Monument) through the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (the Act). The Monument encompasses 5,280 acres and was established to conserve, protect, and enhance the unique and nationally important paleontological, scientific, educational, scenic, and recreational resources and values. The Monument is located in Doña Ana County, New Mexico, and is approximately 5 miles northwest of Las Cruces in the southern third of the Robledo Mountains (see enclosed map).

As stated in the Act "Congress finds that-

> *(1) in 1987, a major deposit of Paleozoic Era fossilized footprint megatrackways was discovered in the Robledo Mountains in southern New Mexico;*
>
> *(2) the trackways contain footprints of numerous amphibians, reptiles, and insects (including previously unknown species), plants, and petrified wood dating back approximately 280,000,000 years, which collectively provide new opportunities to understand animal behaviors and environments from a time predating the dinosaurs;"*

The Act requires the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to develop a comprehensive management plan for the long-term protection and management of the Monument. In order to address resource uses versus resource protection as well as the long-term management of the area, and to fully analyze all impacts, the BLM will develop a Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) for the Monument. Two terms will be used in this process to describe areas being addressed: they are Planning Area and Decision Area. Both are within the Robledo Mountains. The Planning Area includes the Robledo Mountains and immediately surrounding areas where actions may impact the Monument or where resources may be impacted by Monument management. The Decision Area, that is the area for which decisions will be made in the RMP, consists entirely of the 5,280 acres of public land, both surface and subsurface, within the designated National Monument.

Several management mandates are stated in the Act and are quoted below:

"*The Secretary shall manage the Monument (A) in a manner that conserves, protects, and enhances the resources and values of the Monument …"*

"(2) National Landscape Conservation system – the Monument shall be managed as a component of the National Landscape Conservation System."

"The Secretary shall provide for public interpretation of, and education and scientific research on, the paleontological resources of the Monument, with priority given to exhibiting and curating the resources in Doña Ana County, New Mexico"

"Except as needed for administrative purposes or to respond to an emergency, the use of motorized vehicles in the Monument shall be allowed only on roads and trails designated for use by motorized vehicles under the management plan … ."

"The Secretary may issue permits for special recreation events involving motorized vehicles within the boundaries of the Monument—

(A) to the extent the events do not harm paleontological resources; and
(B) subject to any terms and conditions that the Secretary determines to be necessary."

"The Secretary may allow grazing to continue in any area of the Monument in which grazing is allowed before the date of enactment of this Act, subject to applicable laws (including regulations)."

As the planning process begins, the BLM's goal is to reach out and involve the public. The first opportunity for you to participate in this planning process will be the upcoming public scoping open house. The open house format will allow staff to provide information explaining the planning and EIS study process, as well as information regarding the resources and uses that occurs in the Planning Area. The open house will be:

JANUARY 26, 2010
3:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.
BEST WESTERN MISSION INN
EL PUEBLO ROOM
1765 S. MAIN STREET
LAS CRUCES, NEW MEXICO

Your thoughts, ideas, and comments are important to us throughout the process. Please attend the scoping meeting or send us your written comments on the enclosed pre-addressed comment form before the scoping period ends, which is February 10, 2010.

Also, if you wish to be removed from the mailing list, please let us know by checking the box on the comment form. Otherwise your name will be retained on the list and you will receive information on the Monument RMP/EIS in the future.

BLM will provide you an opportunity later in the process to review the Draft RMP/EIS, which is scheduled for release in Spring 2011. During the public review period, BLM will conduct a

public meeting to accept comments on the adequacy of the Draft RMP/EIS. Written comments will also be accepted during the review period.

Informational materials like this letter will be available on the Las Cruces District Office website at www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/fo/Las_Cruces_District_Office. If you have any questions, would like to be on the mailing list, or would like to speak with someone, please call Lori Allen at (575) 525-4454.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bill Childress

Bill Childress
District Manager

3 Enclosures

PREHISTORIC TRACKWAYS NATIONAL MONUMENT RMP/EIS

PLANNING ISSUES AND MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

The process for developing a Monument Plan begins with identification of planning issues (40 CFR 1502.7 and 43 CFR 1610.4-1).

Planning issues express opportunities, conflicts and problems associated with the management of public land. Issues also reflect new data, new or revised policies, and changes in resource uses that affect a Resource Management Plan - issues are considered generally external to the BLM

Management concerns are topics or points of dispute that involve a resource management activity or land use and often are internal to the agency. While some of these concerns may overlap issues, a management concern is generally more important to BLM staff, an individual or group, whereas a planning issue has the potential to be a more widespread source of conflict or opportunity.

The issues and management concerns presented below are preliminary, based on the best available information. The issues or concerns will be refined and new ones may be identified during public scoping and throughout the planning process.

Preliminary Planning Issues and Management Concerns

Paleozoic Resource Research and Protection
Interpretation and Education
Recreation Use and Paleozoic Resource Protection
Travel and Access
Off-Highway Use
Livestock Grazing
Special Designations
Community Pit #1
Expanded Boundary Possibilities for Adjacent Areas
Possible Upcoming Legislation

PLANNING CRITERIA

The BLM planning regulations (at 43 CFR 1610.4-2) require development of planning criteria to guide preparation of an RMP. ***Planning criteria*** are the standards, rules, and other guidelines developed by managers and interdisciplinary teams, with public input, for use in forming judgments about plan-level decision making, analysis and data collection. These criteria are used to establish the parameters or "ground rules" for making planning decisions and simplifying RMP actions. The criteria may be adjusted during RMP development based on management concerns and the results of the public scoping process.

Potential cooperative agencies, such as Federal and State regulatory agencies, local governments, and tribal governments, will be invited to participate as a cooperating agency in preparation of the Monument RMP/EIS.

Preliminary Planning Criteria

- **The Monument Plan will be in compliance with the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (the Act).**
- **The Monument Plan will be in compliance with the Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) Manual and Handbook.**
- **While the multiple-use mandates of, Federal Land Policy & Management Act (FLPMA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and all other applicable laws, regulations, and policies will be followed to the extent appropriate, the provisions of the Act will prevail in managing the Monument.**
- **Land use decisions in the Monument Plan will apply to the surface and subsurface estate managed by the BLM.**
- **The planning process will follow the BLM's policies in the Land Use Planning Handbook, H-1601-1 for program specific guidance.**
- **Public participation and collaboration will be an integral part of the planning process and will involve all interested groups, individuals and agencies.**

Appendix C: Public Notice

PUBLIC NOTICE

PREHISTORIC TRACKWAYS NATIONAL MONUMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

BLM PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE
JANUARY 26, 2010
3:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.
BEST WESTERN MISSION INN
EL PUEBLO ROOM
1765 S MAIN STREET
LAS CRUCES NEW MEXICO

BLM will be hosting an open house to provide information explaining the planning and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) study process, as well as information regarding the resources and uses that occur in the area. The Monument is located in Doña Ana County, New Mexico and is approximately 5 miles northwest of Las Cruces in the southern third of the Robledo Mountains.

For information contact: Lori Allen, BLM Las Cruces District Office, (575) 525-4454.

Appendix D: Public Meeting Flyer

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For information contact:
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Appendix E: BLM News Release

BLM NEWS RELEASE

US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR ■ BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
NEW MEXICO STATE OFFICE ■1474 RODEO RD ■ SANTA FE, NM 87505
Hans Stuart■ External Affairs Chief ■ 505.438.7510

For Immediate Release
January 5, 2010

For Additional Information
Tom Phillips 575.525.4377

BLM to Prepare Management Plan for Prehistoric Trackways National Monument

The Bureau of Land Management's Las Cruces District Office will prepare a Resource Management Plan for the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument that will guide future management of the 5,280-acre area northwest of Las Cruces.

A public scoping process opened today in order to solicit public comments and identify issues (e.g., natural resource and public use issues) anticipated within the Monument, which was created under the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009.

Comments on issues may be submitted in writing by any of the following methods:

- Website: http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/fo/Las_Cruces_District_Office.html
- E-mail: lcfo_rmp@nm.blm.gov
- Fax: (575) 525-4412
- Mail: BLM, Las Cruces District Office
  Prehistoric Trackways National Monument Planner
  1800 Marquess Street
  Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005

In addition, a public scoping meeting will be scheduled in Las Cruces in early February to present information about the effort and receive input from the public. The meeting will be announced within the next 2 weeks and notices will be published in Las Cruces newspapers. The comment period will close 15 days after the date the public scoping meeting is held.

For further information about this effort contact and/or to have your name added to the BLM's Prehistoric Trackways mailing list, contact Lori Allen at (575) 525-4454 or write the BLM at the address listed above; you can also e-mail Lori at Lori_Allen@blm.gov.

The purpose of the public scoping process is to determine relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis, including alternatives, and guide the planning process. Preliminary issues for the planning area that have been identified by the BLM, other agencies, and other stakeholders include Paleozoic resource protection, scientific research, off-highway vehicle use/recreation, plus interpretation and education.

-more-

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The BLM will work collaboratively with interested parties to identify the management decisions that are best suited to local, regional, and national needs and concerns within the scope of the BLM's legal authorities. The agency will use an interdisciplinary approach to develop the plan in order to consider the variety of resource issues and concerns identified. Specialists with expertise in the following disciplines will be involved in the planning process: Planning and NEPA, Paleontology, Outdoor Recreation, Minerals and Geology, Archeology, Wildlife, and others as may be needed.

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The BLM manages more land -- 253 million acres -- than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about $1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

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